

DRIEHAUS LEADS BIPARTISAN COALITION CALLING ON PRESIDENT OBAMA TO SUPPORT JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

WASHINGTON, DC—Representative Steve Driehaus (D-OH) today led a bipartisan group of lawmakers in calling on President Barack Obama to include funding for the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) alternate engine in his budget for FY 2010. Rep. Driehaus and 24 other House members underscored the importance of the JSF development as America's sole air superiority aircraft, and urged the President to recognize the long-term benefits and cost savings that are projected with the development of a competitive propulsion system.

"The Joint Strike Fighter alternate engine program is not only essential for a strong national defense, but promises huge cost savings for taxpayers in years to come," said Rep. Driehaus. "At the same time, this program is critically important to the First District. GE Aviation in Evendale is at the forefront of the alternate engine development, and funding this program would strengthen our local economy and create jobs. I'm proud to be leading this effort, and I urge the President to make this project a priority in his budget."

Text of the letter follows.

April 23, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We request that you include funding for the Joint Strike Fighter alternate engine in your budget for fiscal year 2010. Competition within any market is understood to yield products of a higher quality at a lower price. With the continued development of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) as our nation's sole air superiority aircraft, it is essential that the components used within the platform are highly reliable. It is with the spirit of competition that we request full funding for the research, development, testing, evaluation and procurement of an alternate engine that may be interchanged with the currently contracted propulsion system.

Strong bipartisan support within Congress has invested approximately \$2.5 billion since fiscal year 1995 into an alternate engine for the JSF. Since 2006, the Department of Defense (DOD) has repeatedly attempted to cancel funding for the JSF alternate engine program, contrary to both congressional intent and enacted legislation. The shortsightedness of the budgetary requests by the DOD fail to recognize the long-term benefits and cost savings that are widely projected with the development of a competitive propulsion system. Following the "Great Engine War," the United States Air Force continues to use engines for the F-16 Falcon that have been built and perfected through direct competition by both Pratt and Whitney and General Electric.

It would be prudent for the DOD to revisit the current contract for the JSF propulsion system to address questions of operational risk, cost savings, responsible government action, and relations with key allies. This is especially true now that General Electric and Rolls-Royce have offered to negotiate the remaining development and future production of the alternate engine on fixed price terms.

Unlike other recent attempts to renegotiate defense contracts, it is proposed that a new agreement be settled to develop and then fund engines for the JSF by both Pratt and Whitney and the General Electric/Rolls-Royce team. As the DOD continues to perfect its acquisition and contracting procedures, we strongly urge that you include funding for the JSF alternate propulsion system within the Presidential Budget request to the Congress.

Sincerely,

Steve Driehaus
John Boehner
Jean Schmidt
Steven LaTourette
Geoff Davis
Robert Latta
Marcia L. Fudge
Steve Austria
Tim Ryan
Charles Wilson
Marcy Kaptur
Michael Turner
Mary Jo Kilroy
Betty Sutton
Brad Ellsworth
Zachary Space
Mary Fallin
Bobby Scott
Joe Wilson
Jim Jordan
André Carson
Steven Rothman
John Boccieri
Pat Tiberi
Steve Buyer

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